



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Political Science

ANTI CORRUPTION MOVEMENT IN INDIA

KEY WORDS: Lokayukta, Lokpal, Ombudsman, Corruption,

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ABSTRACT

In India Lokpal and Lokayukta will be vital role in the anti-corruption. but government is not interested to implement the Lokpal Bill. Even the Lokayukta is also lost its power by the government actions. if the people take the bold steps and presser on the government to implement the lokpal bill. it will be helpful to decrease the corruption in India.

INTRODUCTION

Political Corruption is an on-going problem in India, acknowledged domestically and internationally. Transparency International ranked India 95 out of 182 on its 2011 Corruption Perceptions Index, with a score of 3.1. India scored better than North Korea and Somalia, which had scores of 1. New Zealand ranked No.1 with a score of 9.5 additionally; Transparency International reported that more than 50 percent of Indian respondents disclosed they paid bribes.

To use basic public services, which indicates a relatively high level of actual corruption (Transparency International: 2010). Corruption can lead to decreased economic development, as theft diverts money for public services and infrastructure from its original purpose. It can also cause foreign investors to avoid new investments, as they may wish to avoid paying bribes levied by corrupt officials. India's 2005 Right to Information Act called for increased transparency and required that the government disclose requested information to Indian citizens, allowing them to expose corrupt acts. However, this legislation does not directly address corruption, and complaints against corrupt officials often go unanswered.

Lokpal-An Indian Ombudsman

The Indian Lokpal is synonymous to the institution of Ombudsman existing in the Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Finland, Denmark etc). The office of the Ombudsman originated in Sweden in 1809 and has been adopted by many nations. The Swedish word Ombudsman means a procurator or agent of civil affairs which may be interpreted as the people advocate. Ombudsman is a government official who investigates citizen's complaints against the administrative and judicial action. Though appointed by the legislature he is an independent functionary-independent of all three organs of the state, but reports to the legislature. The ombudsman can act both on the basis of complaints made by citizens or suo moto-that is, on his own initiative. He can look into allegations of corruption as well as administration.

Lokayuktas in the States

Even after a lapse of so many years nothing has been done substantially at the central level for implementing the institution of Lokpal. But at the state level, many states have adopted this institution in the name of Lokayukta has been constituted, beginning with Orissa in 1971. However, the power, functions of jurisdiction of Lokayuktas are not uniform in the courtly. In some state, it has been adpplicable to the entire elected representative including CM. on the contrary, in some other state legislators have been deliberately kept out of his purview. Lokayuktas have not been provided with their independent investigating machinery making them dependent on the government agencies. As a result there lies enough scope for the politicians and the bureaucrats to tinker with the process of investigation.

Historical background of Indian Ombudsman as Lokpal

The beginning of Lokpal Movement in India

After India attained independence, M.K.Gandhi's call to his colleagues in the freedom struggle to convert their association into LokSevak Sangh and engage in social constructive work was Shambhu Dutta Sharma who had refused to serve under the British and joined him in India's struggle for independence. They later formed a Lok Sevak Sangh as a sister organization of the Servants of people Society and undertook the constructive social work during which they came face to face with pervasive corruption which they found as the greatest impediment and hindrance to any developmental work. They identified political corruption as the mother of all corruption and just as in the case of a staircase we have to begin the clean up from top, it decisively undertook the initiative to eliminate corruption, criminality and abuse of authority from Indian politics, which they termed it as political reform work that they undertook as a critical constituent of civil society in association with many fraternal NGOs.

The Administrative reform committee of Rajashtan and Maharashtra recommended the establishment of this institution at state level. On 16th December 1963 in parliament the Home Minister also admitted the importance and urgency of providing administration. The 1st Administrative Reform Commission set up in 1966 under the Chairmanship of Morarji Desai in its very first intrim report on the "Dproblem of redress of citizens Grievances- recommended the constitution of a two-tier machinery- of a Lokpal at the Centers and Lokayuktaas in states, as it will remove the sense of injustice from the minds of citizens and also instil the public confidence in the efficiency of Administrative machinery.

Efforts for setting up of Lokpal

To give effect to this recommendation of Administrative Reform Commission a bill namely, the "The Lokpal and the Lokayuktas bill 1968, was first time introduced in the Fourth Lok sabha in 1968, and was passed there in 1969. However while it was pending in the Rajya Sabha, the Lok Sabha was dissolved resulting the first death of Bill. The bill was revived in 1971, 1977, 1985, 1996, 1998 and more recently in 2001. Each time after the bill was introduced to the house it was referred to some committee for improvement- a joint Committee of parliament, or a departmental standing Committee of the Home Ministry-except 1985 before the government could take a final stand on the issue the house was dissolved and bill lapsed. In 1985 the bill withdrawn.

The long-standing crusade against corruption on Gandhian lines by GSSB and its predecessor, Lok Sevak Sangh, since its first letter to the Prime Minister of India, Shri P.V.Narasimha Rao in 1994 and in a more organized form from 1999 to the present Union Government has been primarily on the following three demands or remedial measures for elimination of corruption, criminality and abuse of authority from Indian politics to ensure ethical governance: (i)

appointment of strong and effective Lokpal, (ii) debarring of criminals and corrupt from contesting elections, and (iii) forfeiture of illegally acquired property. The more than decade year long struggle by the Gandhina Seva and Satyagraha Brigade and its predecessor, Lok Sevak Sangh, for the above three demands met with partial success when the 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) appointed by the Congress-led UPA(I) Government accepted all the three demands in 2007 and incorporated them in its 4th Report titled? Ethics in Governance.

With the passage of time, Lok Sevak Sangh founded the Gandhina Seva and Satyagraha Brigade in 2008 to undertake the Satyagraha programme for any cause of national interest, including their political reform work, carried out by the Lok Sevak Sang and their recommendations were subsequently accepted by the Government of India in 2008 in its Action Taken Report, as a result of Gandhina Seva and Satyagraha Brigade's persistent and sustained struggle on Gandhina lines. Further, in pursuant of their 'Do or Die' mission to eliminate corruption and criminality from Indian politics, it demanded the Union Government to take further action on having accepted the 3 recommendations of the 2nd ARC by enacting necessary legislations and give a reasonable time frame for the same by 23rd December 2010, or else it would be left with no alternative but to resume their month long Satyagraha in the Gandhian way from 1st January 2011, as per their commitment made to fellow countrymen, who have extended their moral support to their campaign for clean politics, culminating in Fastunto-Daht, the last weapon in the Gandhina armoury, if by 27th January 2011 there is no response that the Lokpal legislation is introduced in the Budget session of Parliament.

The Gandhina Seva and Satyagraha Brigade went on a month long relay fasts at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi from 1st January 2011, and on getting no response from the Government on their demands, 5 of their Satyagrahis, of the age group of 85 years and above, including Shri Sambhu Dutta, the oldest of them all at 94 years old, went on Fast-unto-Death from the forenoon of 30th January 2011, the Martyrdom Anniversary of Gandhiji, after more than a decade long struggle against corruption

When they were on fast-unto-death, many eminent people visited them to show solidarity to their crusade. Later, a group called India Against Corruption, comprising of Swami Agnivesh, Prashant Bhushan, Kiran Bedi, Arvind Kejriwal, and others, as the video also shows, Rajinder Sachar among other pleaded before Shri Shambhu Dutta and other Satyagrahis to end their Fast-unto-Death and give the struggle and responsibility to them. The Freedom Fighter, on behalf of other Satyagrahis and the Gandhina Satyagraha Brigade, agreed to give them the Gandhian struggle that he had led for more than 15 years and postponed the fast for three months until which time it expected the IAC to bring to fruition their first and one of their three demands for elimination of corruption and criminality from Indian politics.

Entry of Anna Hazare in Lokpal Movement

In 2010, following major corruption scandals, the Indian government drafted a version of a Lokpal bill. Many citizens and social activists considered the proposed measure weak, as it did not cover the prime minister, members of Parliament, and cabinet ministers. Dissatisfaction gave rise to a national protest movement in 2011 under the leadership of seventy four year old Anna Hazare of Talegan Siddhi from Maharashtra. Anna's social activities as a community organizer against alcohol and ensure water access for individuals in rural areas was already acknowledged.

His popularity was highlighted through his work in 2003 for advocating the Freedom of Information Act in India, which was eventually passed in 2005. He hassled anticorruption

protests for two decades and finally in 2011 under the banner of India Against Corruption Lok Pal Movement started.

Anna Hazare and his team believed that the government's version of the Lokpal bill was too weak because the ombudsman it would establish could not investigate actions of elected officials. The government argued that an ombudsman was a good idea, but that it would be too powerful if it was able to investigate elected leaders. After unsuccessful discussions and deliberations with the government among, Hazare began a hunger strike on April 5, 2011 for a stronger bill. Subsequently large protests erupted in support of Hazare. Protesters hoped to pressure the Indian government into forming a Joint Drafting Committee for a Lokpal bill with five ministers and five civil society members.

The protest sparked extensive discussions across news and social media about whether the bill should include the entire government. It also brought many people to the streets in support of Hazare's movement. After four days of Hazare fasting, the government agreed to form the Joint Drafting Committee which met nine times over the course of the next two months with no substantial result. The significant differences arose between the ministers and civil society members. These differences were primarily over whom the Lokpal would have authority to investigate, the obstacle to earlier versions of the bill. Members were further divided after police arrested social activist Baba Ramdev and forcefully removed his supporters, who were peacefully protesting against corruption in Ramlila Maidan. However, after massive protest across the country, a strong Lokpal bill was introduced in Lok Sabha which excluded the top government officials. Subsequently it was rejected by Anna and the Movement Continued. Despite strong support for the movement and its ability to gain several key concessions from the Indian government, the stronger version of the Lokpal bill developed in August has not passed. On December 27, 2011, the Lok Sabha, approved the government's latest version of the bill and the demand of strong Lokpal by Anna remained a dream. However, it's always better to have a toothless tiger than not to have at all and media has been an instrumental for a present Lok Pal prepared by the government.

CONCLUSION

India is a country where honesty and integrities in public and private life have been glorified and upheld in great epics such as Vedas, Upanishad and in the books and practices of every religion practiced here. Yet, India today is one of the most corrupt countries in the world. Bringing public servant and public functionaries under a scanner which makes them strictly accountable, is the start of a movement against corruption in India. And one significant step in attacking the spectrum of corruption in India will be the implementation of the Lok Pal Bill. Realizing the need of such institution with its immediate effect, A movement the need of such institution with its immediate effect, A movement started by Anna Hazare with the support of other volunteers and social activists. The movement has also shown how media can effectively be used. Though the propriety regarding active participation of news media in a movement is a media creation. The role of the media as an "institutional limb of modern democracy was yet again amply demonstrated during the recent phase of the Jan Lokpal movement that was unprecedented in many ways. Projecting the anti-corruption Jan Lokpal movement as a second freedom struggle was nothing short of a masterstroke by team Anna. The movement has been all the elements of the freedom struggle an insensitive government disconnected with the pulse of the people, a Gandhian non-violent protest with an indefinite fast, the waving of the tricolour, slogans of Jain Bharo, Inquilab, Zindabad, Jai Hind and Vande Mataram and the overwhelming participation of the youth. Such was the impact that even the Indian Diaspora was inspired. Many genuinely felt that since they were not there during Mahatma Gandhi's freedom struggle, let's now be a part of this

movement for freedom from corruption.

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